

Claims

1. A computer program product with instructions for a first computer to participate in electronic business, the computer program product comprising:  
a communication module to support communication between the first computer and a second computer; and  
a schema module to load a business schema from a central repository), the business schema being a predefined sequence of business transactions combined with documents that are assigned to the business transactions, wherein the business schema provides a predefined communication format applied to the documents, wherein the communication format enables the first computer to participate in electronic business with the second computer.
2. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the second computer is under control of a second computer program that has substantially the same functions as the first program.
3. The computer program product of claim 2, wherein the communication module supports communication with a third computer under control of a third computer program being a business application, and wherein the predefined communication format provided by the business schema enables the first computer to participate in electronic business with the third computer.

4. The computer program product of claim 3, wherein the communication module forwards the documents to the second computer and to the third computer for interpreting and processing by the second and third computer programs, respectively.
5. The computer program product of claim 1, adapted to be operated on the first computer being a personal computer.
6. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the communication module is adapted to use program resources on the first computer that are selected from the group of: word processing tools, email tool, browser tool, and graphic user interface tool.
7. The computer program product of claim 7, wherein the communication module is adapted to support communication with a business application being the back-end of a client/server application.
8. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the communication module supports communication with the business application being an ERP system.
9. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the communication module is adapted to communicate via a protocol selected from the group of: ebXML messaging, SOAP, and WSDL.

10. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the schema module provides a selection mask to the user of the first computer to select a context for identifying documents and transactions.
11. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the context is selected from the group of: business process, product classification, industry classification, geopolitical, official constraints, business process role, supporting role, and system capabilities.
12. The computer program product of claim 10, wherein the selection mask has pull-down options.
13. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein a service module combines input received from the user of the program with data from the repository to generate data that goes into the business document.
14. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the service module cooperates with the schema module to forward business documents with input data into the repository.
15. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the service module stores the downloaded schema locally on the first computer.
16. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the service module modifies the schema in cooperation with the user of the first computer.

17. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the service module uses graphic representations on an output device of the first computer to show the current status in the sequence of the business schema and to modify the sequence.
18. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the service module indicates the arrival of documents to the first computer and opens the documents in the layout that has been defined by the sender of the documents.
19. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein the communication format comprises XML-based UBL.
20. The computer program product of claim 1, wherein layout data of documents and business data of documents are separated.

21. A method to participate in electronic business in a computer network system having a first computer, a second computer and a third computer, the method comprising:
- loading a business schema from a central repository to the first computer as a predefined sequence of business transactions and documents in electronic business that the first computer performs with the second computer and with the third computer, wherein the sequence has a predefined format that is used by the second computer and by the third computer; and communicating according to the business schema between the computers, wherein a program on the first computer interacts with a second program on the second computer and interacts with a business application on a third computer.
22. The method of claim 22, wherein communicating is supported by a communication module on the first computer and wherein the communication format comprises XML-based UBL.

23. A system for executing electronic business, the system comprising first and second computers interconnected and communicating through a network, the first and second computers being controlled by first and second programs, respectively, and network interfaces for communicating through the network, wherein the first computer includes a display for displaying data and operations related to the business and a user input for allowing a user of the first computer to provide data input for executing the business, and further wherein the first computer, as part of the first program includes a schema module to load a business schema from a central repository, the business schema being a predefined sequence of business transactions combined with documents that are assigned to the business transactions, wherein the business schema uses a predefined format that enables business communication between the first and second computers.
24. The system of claim 23, wherein the second program on the second computer has a schema module with features that are substantially equivalent to the schema module of the first program.

25. A method to operate a first computer to participate in electronic business, the method comprising:  
operating a communication module to support  
communication between the first computer and a  
second computer; and  
operating a schema module to load a business schema from  
a central repository), the business schema being a  
predefined sequence of business transactions  
combined with documents that are assigned to the  
business transactions, wherein the business schema  
provides a predefined communication format applied  
to the documents, wherein the communication format  
enables the first computer to participate in  
electronic business with the second computer.
26. The method of claim 25, wherein the communication module  
is operated to support communication with a third  
computer under control of a business application, and  
wherein the predefined communication format provided by  
the business schema enables the first computer to  
participate in electronic business with the third  
computer.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the communication  
module is operated to forward the documents to the  
second computer and to the third computer for  
interpreting and processing.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein operating the schema module includes providing a selection mask to the user of the first computer to select a context for identifying documents and transactions.
29. The method of claim 25 further comprising operating a service module to combine input received from the user of the first computer with data from the repository to generate data that goes into the business document.
30. The method of claim 29, wherein the service module cooperates with the schema module to forward business documents with input data into the repository.
31. The method of claim 29, wherein the service module stores the downloaded schema locally on the first computer.
32. The method of claim 29, wherein the service module indicates the arrival of documents to the first computer and opens the documents in a layout that has been defined by the sender of the documents.